

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 214 219

CS 503 787

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TITLE Recommended Oral Communication Competencies (Grades 9-12).
SPONS AGENCY Eastern Communication Association.
PUB DATE Mar 82
NOTE 15p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Curriculum Development; Elementary Secondary Education; Guidelines; *Minimum Competencies; *Models; Program Descriptions; *Speech Communication; *Speech Curriculum

IDENTIFIERS West Virginia Speech Association

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the project described in this paper was to develop, publish, and disseminate a model set of oral communication competencies for West Virginia students in kindergarten through grade 12. The first section of the paper discusses the purpose of the project, which was prompted by the growth of the competency movement, and provides some background information about it. The second section explains the data gathering phase of the project, which involved the use of the Delphi method of surveying members of the West Virginia Speech Association (WVSA) in three separate rounds in order to develop a consensus for the final listing of competencies. The third section briefly outlines the process of publishing the competencies list, while the fourth section offers a more detailed look at their dissemination. The fifth section discusses the consequences of the project, including a sharpened focus in the English-language arts curriculum development of West Virginia schools, and an increase in membership in the WVSA. The final section lists three recommendations from the project: (1) the need for the WVSA to develop a system to monitor the actual implementation of speech education in the state, (2) the need for all professional organizations to monitor speech education in secondary schools, and (3) the need for future projects similar to this one. A copy of the competencies and a project budget report are appended. (FL)

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RECOMMENDED ORAL COMMUNICATION
COMPETENCIES (Grades 9-12)

by
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Fairmont State College
Fairmont, West Virginia

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Eastern Communication Association
March 8, 1982

C5503787

I. THE GRANT'S PURPOSE:

The grant from the Eastern Communication Association to the West Virginia Speech Association (referred to as the WWSA) was made in order to develop, publish, and disseminate a set of oral communication competencies (grades 9-12). As the strength of the competency movement (in public education) intensified nationally and in West Virginia, the need for a list of oral communication competencies developed by professional speech educators was seen as essential. As the project evolved, the final product of this project (Recommended Oral Communication Competencies, Grades 9-12 -- see Appendix A) was seen to have potential value beyond the state of West Virginia.

This report describes the development, publication and dissemination of a model set of oral communication competencies.

II. DEVELOPING ORAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCIES

A. THE NEED

The increasing frequency of references to the competency movement in professional and general literature, coupled with similar comments within West Virginia's education system, suggested that a list of oral communication competencies would be needed soon. Since the WWSA was in the final stages of a campaign to including speaking and listening as basic skills in the state's high school graduation requirements, the development of specific competencies seemed imminent.

B. THE METHOD

The Delphi method of surveying was selected as the most

effective method of developing those competencies. The Delphi method is a technique of exploring and defining a problem through a series of written exchanges with experts in the area. The experts are asked to list in writing specified aspects of a problem: those responses are compiled. The compiled list of responses are sent to all participants for modifications (corrections, additions, and deletions). The modification process can be used several times in order to refine the list. The Delphi method has the advantages of low cost and potentially high levels of expertise involvement; while the primary disadvantages would be the limited amount of creative group dynamics and a possibly biased sorting of the participants' responses.

For this project, a three stage strategy was adopted: each stage would be sent to all WWSA members. Stage one involved sending a letter requesting general and specific competency recommendations from every WWSA member. The general and specific responses were sorted and arranged by the project director. (There was no effort to systematize the stage one response list.) For stage two, the list of first stage responses was sent to every WWSA member. The respondents were asked to submit recommendations for additions, corrections, modifications and deletions of the items on the first list. When all the responses had returned, a second list of items was developed according to those modification responses. Stage three requested that the respondents note any further modifications in each item and suggest an appropriate order of general and specific competencies.

On the second and third response lists, modifications (additions, corrections or deletions) in individual items were made on the basis of

two or more respondent recommendations. The final sequential arrangement of the competencies was also determined by the frequency of respondent placements.

C. THE POPULATION

A total of 28 individuals responded to one or more of the three rounds of this Delphi approach. The total membership of the WWSA at the time of this project was 39. At the end of the 1980-81 school year, the total membership increase to 56 which the project director believes is directly related to this project.

III. PUBLISHING THE COMPETENCIES

Once the final draft of the oral communication competencies list was completed, the printing and dissemination process were undertaken. Robert Heffner, the graphic artist in the Learning Resource Center at Fairmont State College, developed a cover design. The printing shop at Fairmont State College typeset and printed 1000 copies of the brochure.

IV. DISSEMINATING THE COMPETENCIES

In order to assure that the Recommended Oral Communication Competencies Grades 9-12 lists should not end up buried in files or in wastepaper baskets, the director of the project assumed a broad definition of dissemination. Dissemination took on a variety of activities deemed necessary to distribute the list into appropriate professionals and to generate actions in the schools to assure the teaching and learning of speaking and listening skills.

Distribution began with building mailing lists and advertising the availability of the list in professional publications. A basic mailing list was developed including the following targets:

1. all WSA members
2. speech and drama teachers in all West Virginia high schools and junior high schools.
3. all principals in West Virginia high schools and junior high schools.
4. all county superintendents and county curriculum specialists and administrators.
5. all West Virginia Department of Education personnel who might be involved in the language arts curriculum.
6. all members of the West Virginia Board of Education.
7. all college and university libraries in West Virginia.
8. all higher education speech communication and theatre faculty.

The secretaries for the Fine Arts Division at Fairmont State College, Mrs. Debby Rogers and Mrs. Carol Mainella, assisted in developing the mailing lists, typed mailing labels, stuffed envelopes, and sorted the envelopes for bulk mailing.

A total of 526 copies of Recommended Oral Communication Competencies Grade 9-12 with an accompanying letter were mailed initially.

The director sent notifications of the availability to all the professional journals and newsletters.

Since the initial mailing, a total of 148 copies of the listing have been distributed including the following bulk mailings:

25 copies to Dr. Raymond Brinzer, Language Arts Coordinator
West Virginia Department of Education

25 copies to Dr. Virginia Richmond
West Virginia University

(Dr. Richmond indicated that her department was reproducing copies of the listing for use in all sections of the graduate course in Classroom

Communication offered by West Virginia University which includes a large number of practicing teachers throughout the state.) A total of 98 copies of the project's listing were mailed to individuals who requested the list.

Since the project director planned to attend the 1981 national convention of the Speech Communication Association at Anaheim, California, a total of 200 copies of the project's listing were taken to that convention for distribution. Copies of the listing were made available to the participants and audiences of every session on competencies at the convention. About 50 copies of the listing were placed on the convention's literature tables for the general availability to all persons at the convention.

V. CONSEQUENCES OF THIS PROJECT:

A consequence of Recommended Oral Communication Competencies, Grades 9-12 has been a sharpened focus in the English-language arts curriculum development. The West Virginia Department of Education began a curriculum development process shortly after the publication of this project's listing. The curriculum development process was based on specific competencies and sample learner outcomes. Two of the nine categories within the English-language arts area are speaking and listening. Thus, the project's competency listings has become the conceptual basis--although not the exclusive statement--of the competency-based curriculum in speaking and listening in West Virginia.

While there have been some suggestions of modifications of curricula to include speaking and listening instruction in individual high schools,

a statewide programmatic change in English-language arts curricula has not yet become public. A method has not been developed to monitor the teaching of speaking and listening in West Virginia high schools, and the use of qualified oral communication teachers. Future developments in West Virginia's competency-based educational movement will depend on federal initiatives supporting the basic skills, on a national public awareness of speaking and listening as basic skills, on the continued effort of speech educators in working with the state department of education, and on the resolve of the profession to assure equal speech education for all students.

As noted earlier, the 1980-81 membership of the West Virginia Speech Association increased for 30 to 56 during the year. This membership increase was most-likely attributal to the dissemination activities for Recommended Oral Communication Competencies, Grades 9-12. It should be noted that the West Virginia Speech Association changed its organizational name at its Fall 1981 conference to the West Virginia Speech Communication Association (WVSCA).

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THIS PROJECT

1. There is a great need for the West Virginia Speech Communication Association to develop some method of monitoring the actual implementation of speech education in the state's high schools.
2. All state professional organizations need to monitor speech education in the high schools. Such information should be compiled at the national level for use.

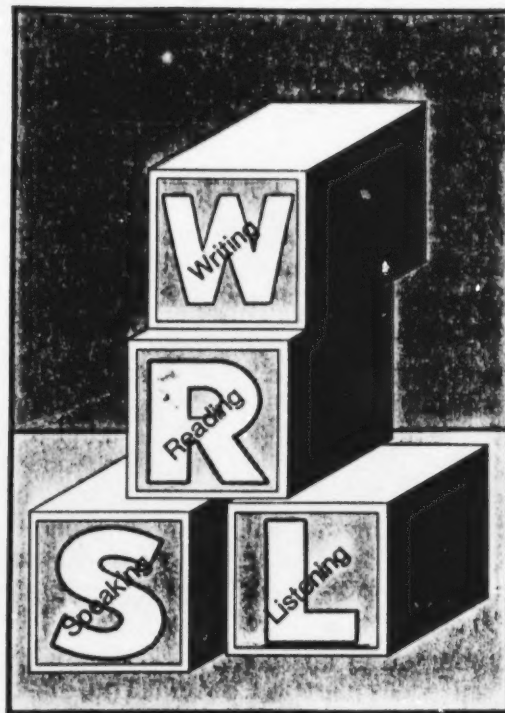
3. The call for future Eastern Communication Association projects such as this, should describe clearly and specifically what budgetary items are acceptable or not acceptable. The exclusion of personnel expenditures (for handling--typing and mailing) from this project's request has caused the project director considerable difficulties with the division secretaries. A number of problems might have been avoided if the secretary who typed the project proposal had not seen a proposed amount for handling (which was not allowed by the funding committee).

APPENDIX I
PROJECT BROCHURE

A. Copy of the Cover

Recommended
Oral
Communication
Competencies
(Grades 9-12)

A Project for the
West Virginia Speech Association



A grant from the Eastern Communication
supported this project

APPENDIX I (continued)

B. Copy of page two.

**ORAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCIES
RECOMMENDED BY THE WEST VIRGINIA SPEECH
ASSOCIATION**

This oral communication competency listing has been developed in response to recently discovered changes in federal educational law and to changes made in the West Virginia high school graduation requirements.

The Education Amendments of 1978, P.L. 95-561, defined the basic skills as including effective oral communication. The federal mandate created the expectation that all basic skills programming will include instruction leading to effective oral communication skills.

On January 9, 1981, after a year-long series of public hearings held by the Department of Education, the West Virginia Board of Education adopted new high school graduation requirements. Those new graduation requirements involved a number of curricular changes including several affecting oral communication education. Most significantly, explicit instruction in the skills of speaking and listening was specified in the English-language arts required content area.

The West Virginia Speech Association responded to the federal mandate and the changes in the state's high school graduation requirements by initiating the project which has resulted in this oral communication competencies listing. The Delphi Method of surveying the entire WVSA membership in three separate rounds was used to develop a consensus for this listing. The best efforts of this state's committed professionals in speech education are presented here.

Represented in this competency listing are those abilities and skills deemed essential to effective oral communication in school, on the job, and in social living. These competencies are recommended by the WVSA to be the goals of oral communication instruc-

APPENDIX I (continued)

C. Copy of page three

tion within the required English-language arts curricula (grades 9-12) of all West Virginia high schools.

A copy of this brochure can be obtained from the project director:

Dr. Charles H. Swanson
Department of Speech Communication
& Theatre
Fairmont State College
Fairmont, West Virginia 26554

**RECOMMENDED ORAL COMMUNICATION
COMPETENCIES (Grades 9-12)**

A West Virginia Speech Association project

The student to be competent in oral communication will:

- I. demonstrate basic oral communication skills by:
 - a. distinguishing between hearing and listening.
 - b. demonstrating listening skills necessary to improve and enhance accurate reception.
 - c. demonstrating vocalization and articulation free from distracting elements which distort the message.
 - d. distinguishing among oral, non-verbal, and written modes of communication.
 - e. distinguishing between visual and paralanguage sources of non-verbal messages.
 - f. demonstrating oral presentation abilities, such as oral reports, oral readings, and discussion.
 - g. identifying the significance of self-concept in oral communication situations.
 - h. using vocal projection appropriate to a variety of specified circumstances.
 - i. demonstrating the ability to provide a variety of appropriate paralinguistic cues in oral delivery through practical exercises and activities.

APPENDIX I (continued)

C. Copy of page four.

The student to be competent in oral communication will:

- II. demonstrate self-confidence and poise in a variety of oral communication situations by:
 - a. interacting with peers without excessive anxiety.
 - b. interacting with a superior without excessive anxiety.
 - c. participating in group discussions without excessive anxiety.
 - d. participating in a meeting without excessive anxiety.
 - f. participating in an interview without excessive anxiety.
 - f. presenting a speech to an audience without excessive anxiety.

The student to be competent in oral communication will:

- III. demonstrate functional concepts of oral communication by:
 - a. identifying the basic elements involved in communication.
 - b. demonstrating an awareness of listening as a process.
 - c. recognizing the relationship between speaking and listening.
 - d. demonstrating a concept of effective feedback in communication situations.
 - e. distinguishing among the six main types of communication events, including intra-personal, inter-personal, small group, public, organizational, and mass communication.
 - f. distinguishing the purposes of the six main types of communication events.
 - g. developing a model of communication.
 - h. demonstrating an understanding of the nature and function of language as a tool for effective communication.
 - i. distinguish between statements of fact and statements of opinion.
 - j. demonstrate an awareness of different points of view.
 - k. demonstrate the ability to analyze an audience in order to promote effective communication.

The student to be competent in oral communication will:

- IV. demonstrate a range of speaking skills which will promote effective oral communication by:
 - a. demonstrating the ability to deliver an oral presentation to an audience.

APPENDIX I (continued)

D. Copy of page five.

- b. demonstrating the ability to paraphrase an idea.
- c. identifying different kinds of communication barriers.
- d. demonstrating the ability to participate in group discussions.
- e. demonstrating the ability to present oneself effectively in an interview.
- f. demonstrating techniques for selecting a topic for presentation.
- g. distinguishing between main points and support materials.
- h. identifying basic organizational patterns.
- i. demonstrating the ability to research information for presentation.
- j. identifying different kinds of evidence.
- k. demonstrating the use of effective appeals in terms of the topic, the audience and the purpose of a speech.
- l. demonstrating the ability to prepare speech materials for different purposes -- to inform, to persuade, to convince and to entertain.
- m. demonstrating the ability to analyze and read aloud different kinds of literary genre for an audience.
- n. demonstrating the ability to use the problem-solving process.
- o. demonstrating the ability to use parliamentary procedures effectively in a meeting.

The student to be competent in oral communication will:

- V. demonstrate a range of skills related to listening which promote effective communication by:
 - a. identifying the components in the listening process.
 - b. demonstrating the ability to listen for and remember information.
 - c. demonstrating the ability to listen to, remember and follow directions.
 - d. identifying non-verbal messages.
 - e. demonstrating the ability to provide feedback which promotes effective communication.
 - f. demonstrating the ability to listen appreciatively.
 - h. identifying a variety of propaganda techniques and appeals used in oral messages.
 - i. evaluating messages received through mass communication.
 - j. identifying the thesis, main points and supporting materials in oral presentations.

APPENDIX II

PROJECT BUDGET REPORT

Funds allocated to the project \$321.00

Project Expenditures:

1. Project Development (stationery, envelopes, postage, long distance telephone calls)	\$154.47
2. Publishing (graphics and printing)	71.03
3. Dissemination (postage and related expenses)	<u>95.54</u>
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$321.04